

Frequently Asked Questions (and responses) – October 28th Auburn M Street Open House

Project Purpose and Schedule

Project Purpose:

- Alleviate Existing And Forecasted Traffic Congestion.
- Improve Safety And Access For The Traveling Public
- Increase the Region's Rail Freight Mobility Through Separation Of Train And Vehicular Traffic At 'M' Street SE.

Project Schedule:

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|--|------------------------------|
| • Pre-Design Study | January 2001 - December 2002 |
| • Preferred Alternative Selected | December 2002 |
| • Seek additional funding for the Project | August 2002 - Ongoing |
| • Final Design | August 2008 – 2010 |
| • Environmental Permitting (Overlap With Design) | August 2008 – 2010 |
| • Advance Utility Relocation | 2010 – 2011 |

ONCE FUNDING SECURED PROCEED WITH:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Property Acquisition (Overlap With Design) | Duration: 1 Year* |
| • Construction | Duration: 18-24 Months* |

* Property acquisition and construction start dates are dependent on funding availability.

General Questions

What about pedestrians and fire access, how will these be provided during any street closures?

During construction pedestrian access may be impacted requiring people to walk to either R Street or F Street or take an alternative mode. Prior to any actual closure of M Street SE, coordination with emergency services would be done to determine the best alternatives for access.

How much will the project cost?

Depending on the details of the preferred alternatives, total project costs could be in the range of \$20 to \$25 million for all design, environmental permitting, property acquisition and construction, this does not include the Auburn Black Diamond Bypass Road, which is a future phase of the project that is currently on hold pending more information about a possible future SR18 interchange. As the design of the project continues, this cost will be refined to reflect the higher level of detail.

What are the expected property impacts and displacements?

The current design would require the purchase of 10 full properties and portions of the roadway frontage of 23 other properties for roadway improvements.

If my property is impacted what is my re-course?

All needed property would be purchased through an acquisition process, see the flier (pink) that discusses this process. As the City gets closer to actually being able to proceed with property acquisitions (after the funding is secured and environmental approvals have been completed) the City's Agents will begin meeting with property owners to discuss the process and their rights in detail.

When will my property be purchased?

The property acquisition process cannot begin until the environmental permitting is complete and the City has obtained the necessary funding. The acquisition process may start as early as Spring 2010 but could be later depending on the availability of funding and the completion date of the environmental permitting.

General Questions, Cont.

What if the project impacts driveway/alley access?

If widening and/or lowering of the roadway impacts property access, a property may require either a steeper driveway, or an alternative access to the property. If reasonable access to the property cannot be provided then the property may become a total purchase.

Would the project result in more noise in the neighborhood?

Possibly. Noise studies are currently underway to determine any impacts and to identify what could be done to lessen impacts.

M Street Grade Separation

How long will the street be closed during construction?

M Street could be temporarily closed to traffic for anywhere between 12 and 18 months while the roadway excavation and the railroad bridge is being constructed.

During construction of M Street where will traffic go?

Primarily, traffic will use Auburn Way South, 'F' Street SE and 'R' Street SE when M Street is closed.

What are the benefits of the Grade Separation?

- Movement of traffic and freight separately without delays from each other.
- Reduction of delay and backups on M Street SE.
- Safer movements for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians across the railway.
- Easier access to and from intersections close to the rail crossing.
- Reduction in the amount of cut-through traffic on residential streets.

If the grade separation is constructed would it attract more traffic?

Traffic projections are based on the land use identified in both the City's comprehensive plan and the projected regional growth and development. If M Street is seen to operate better than other arterial streets, more traffic may use M Street, which would reduce the traffic on the other arterials.

The project proposes a 5 lane section of M Street under SR 18, how does this match up with the remaining segments of M Street?

The full five-lane section would be constructed and transitioned back to the existing roadway, one lane in each direction, at the project limits. In the future, other projects may be developed that could modify M Street to four lanes. This future development may or may not require additional rights-of-way and may occur either before or after the grade separation project.

When M Street is widened, will on-street parking be eliminated?

For most of the project, on-street parking will not be allowed and the road will be striped to eliminate it.

What impact will the proposed grade separation have on 3rd Street SE and 4th Street SE.

The grade separation will improve overall traffic operations on M Street. M Street will not have long backups, and traffic access into and out of 3rd and 4th Streets will be easier. It is anticipated that the intersection of 4th Street SE/M Street will continue to require a traffic signal.

M Street Grade Separation (continued)

How deep below the current grade would the grade separation go? Would it be in the watertable and subject to flooding?

The maximum depth of new construction will be approximately 21 feet below the existing grade, which, according to the monitoring done by the City, is about 5 feet above the highest water table elevation. Pump systems are being designed to accommodate potential flood issues.

How high would the grade separation walls be and would they impact views?

The maximum wall height is expected to be 25 feet; however, the walls on either side of M Street would generally be the same height. Because M Street will go under the Rail tracks, no obstruction of views by the walls is anticipated. There may be a need for fencing along the top of the walls for safety purposes; however, it is not anticipated that these would obstruct any views either.

Auburn Black Diamond Bypass Road

What is the Bypass Road?

The Auburn Black Diamond Bypass road is a proposed connection between M St SE and Auburn Black Diamond Road that would bypass the at-grade rail crossing on R St SE/Auburn Black Diamond Road. During the Pre-Design Study, the bypass road was coupled with the M St Grade Separation as a single project that would mitigate the impacts of BNSF re-opening the Stampede Pass railway.

Why has the bypass road been delayed while the grade separation moves forward?

WSDOT is currently studying a route that connects SR-18 directly to SR-164 (Auburn Way South). The alternatives include a new interchange on SR18 that could significantly impact the design of the Auburn Black Diamond Bypass road. At the time the grade separation final design was initiated in 2008, it did not make sense to move forward with the bypass road design without the WSDOT interchange plans. Since the benefit realized by the grade separation is not dependent on the bypass road, the City decided to move forward with the grade separation and to delay the bypass road until more is known about the WSDOT plans for a future interchange.